

A. Claim 1

Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited reference. For example, claim 1 recites a resilient contact piece portion that extends from a front end edge of a bottom wall to a free end portion thereof. A convex portion is formed at the free end portion of the resilient contact piece portion and projects toward the bottom wall.

The Examiner maintains that Ichida discloses the above features. In regard to Figures 8 and 9 of Ichida, the Examiner interprets the female terminal in an upside down manner, such that the recess 41 is the bottom wall. Since element 41 is a recess, Applicant assumes the Examiner intends that the ceiling wall 33 discloses the claimed bottom wall. Based on such interpretation, the Examiner maintains that the resilient contact piece 38 discloses the claimed resilient contact piece portion.

In regard to the claimed convex portion, the Examiner refers to an “unlabeled portion” in Figure 9 of Ichida. During the March 20, 2006 telephonic interview between the Examiner and the undersigned, the Examiner indicated that the free end portion of piece 38 of Figure 9 shows a curve at the end, and that such portion is the “unlabeled portion” mentioned in the Office Action. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner’s assertion regarding the alleged curve. Due to the variations between Figures 8 and 9, it is unclear whether there is intended to be a “convex portion.” The detailed description of Ichida fails to discuss or clarify this issue. As set forth in MPEP 2125, “[d]rawings and pictures can anticipate claims if they clearly show the structure

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which is claimed.” (emphasis added) (citing *In re Mraz*, 455 F.2d 1069, 173 USPQ 25 (CCPA 1972)).

Further, Applicant submits that even by assuming *arguendo* that Figure 9 does show a slight curve at the end of piece 38, the reference still fails to teach or suggest the claimed convex portion. For example, beginning from bulge 39, the entire piece 38 of Ichida is inclined towards the wall 33 (figures 8 and 9). Accordingly, the piece 38 follows in-line until it reaches the alleged curve. Therefore, there is no convex portion that projects toward the bottom wall. In claim 1, the resilient contact piece portion is substantially parallel to the bottom wall except for a first curved portion and the convex portion. By being substantially parallel, the resilient contact piece portion does not project towards the bottom wall until the claimed convex portion (e.g. see non-limiting embodiment of Figure 1 of present Application). As set forth above, in Ichida, the entire piece 38, starting from the bulge 39, inclines in a line towards the wall 33. Therefore, at the point where the Examiner alleges there is a slight curve, the alleged curve actually projects away from the wall 33, rather than towards it. Thus, Applicant submits that Ichida fails to teach or suggest the claimed convex portion.

Claim 1 further recites that the resilient contact piece portion has a beginning portion extending from the front end edge to the first curved portion and an intermediate portion extending from the first curved portion to the convex portion. The beginning portion and the intermediate portion are both substantially parallel to the bottom wall at a predetermined clearance.

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The Examiner maintains that Ichida discloses the above features. However, as clearly shown in Figures 8 and 9; the portions before and after the alleged first curved portion 39 are not substantially in parallel to the alleged bottom wall 33 at a predetermined clearance. Rather, both portions on either side of the alleged first curved portion 39 incline towards portion 39. Therefore, the clearance between the resilient contact piece 38 and the alleged bottom wall 33, on either side of the portion 39, will vary along their lengths. As specifically set forth in Ichida, “the resilient contact piece 38 is supported only at one end and has a substantially triangular shape” (emphasis added) (col. 7, lines 7-9). Due to such *triangular shape*, the portions on either side of the alleged first curved portion 39 (i.e., the sides of the triangle) are not substantially parallel to the alleged bottom wall 33, as recited in claim 1.

The above argument was discussed during the March 20, 2006 telephonic Interview between the Examiner and the undersigned. The Examiner indicated that due to the term “substantially,” the claimed feature reads on Ichida. However, Ichida must be reviewed in its entirety to determine what the reference, as a whole, would teach or suggest to one skilled in the art. As set forth above, Ichida specifically discloses that the piece 38 is substantially triangular shaped, thus implying that the portions on either side of portion 39 (i.e., the bulge) are inclined. In view of MPEP 2173.05(b), and at least the non-limiting embodiments of Figures 1 and 2 of the present Application, Applicant submits that the term “substantially” is definite, and one skilled in the art would not consider the “substantially triangular shape” of Ichida as equal or comparable to the “substantially parallel” recitation of claim 1 (i.e., triangular ≠ parallel).

In view of the above, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the reference.

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Applicant submits that the above comments regarding the March 20, 2006 telephonic Examiner Interview serve as a Statement of Substance of Interview.

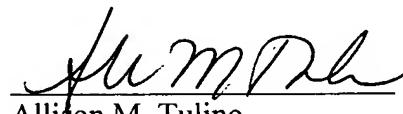
B. Claims 4, 5, 7-9, 12 and 13

Since claims 4, 5, 7-9, 12 and 13 are dependent upon claim 1, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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